

2007 Trafficking in Persons Report for Burkina Faso

BURKINA FASO (Tier 2)

Burkina Faso is a source, transit, and destination country for children and women trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation, with most victims being children. Within the country, children are trafficked for domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, forced agricultural labor, and forced labor in gold mines and stone quarries. Burkinabe children are trafficked to other West

African countries for the same purposes listed above, with the majority likely trafficked to Cote d'Ivoire, and others trafficked to Mali, Benin, Nigeria, and Togo. Children are also trafficked from these West African countries to Burkina Faso for the same purposes listed above. To a lesser extent, Burkinabe women are trafficked to Europe for sexual

exploitation. Women may be trafficked to Burkina Faso from Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Niger for domestic servitude, forced labor in restaurants, and sexual exploitation.

The Government of Burkina Faso does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so, despite limited resources. To strengthen its response to trafficking, the government should draft and pass a law prohibiting trafficking of adults, impose more severe sentences on convicted traffickers, and train border officials to identify traffickers and victims.

Prosecution

The Government of Burkina Faso demonstrated steady law enforcement efforts to combat trafficking over the last year. Burkina Faso does not prohibit all forms of trafficking. Through its 2003 Law No. 038-2003 Concerning the Definition of Child Trafficking in Burkina Faso, it criminalizes all forms of child trafficking. The prescribed maximum penalty of 10 years, imprisonment for this offense is sufficient but not commensurate with the higher penalties for rape. In 2006, local vigilance committees, police, and other

security forces arrested 31 suspected traffickers. Eleven traffickers were convicted, 15 prosecutions are still open, and five persons were released due to lack of evidence. Sentences imposed on convicted traffickers were inadequate, however, with three receiving 1 to 12 months, imprisonment, and eight receiving suspended sentences. In October and December 2006, the government trained law enforcement officials in several provinces about trafficking with financial help and cooperation from its NGO partners. However, the government has yet to provide border officials with such training.

Protection

The Government of Burkina Faso continued to make progress in protecting trafficking victims during the past year. The government continued to operate a center in Ouagadougou for the rehabilitation and reintegration of at-risk children, including trafficking victims. With assistance from UNICEF, the government also continued to provide land grants and personnel to operate 21 trafficking victim transit centers. During the year, these centers assisted approximately 1,043 victims, who were rescued by police, security forces, or local vigilance committees. In 2006, Burkinabe officials cooperated with Malian authorities to intercept and repatriate 39 Burkinabe children trafficked to Mali and 22 Malian children trafficked to Burkina Faso. The government does not encourage victims to participate in trafficking investigations or prosecutions. The government contributes funds to help repatriate foreign victims to their countries of origin after a short stay in transit centers, but it does not provide legal alternatives to their removal to countries where they face hardship or retribution. Victims are not penalized for unlawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked.

Prevention

The Government of Burkina Faso made solid efforts to combat trafficking during the reporting period. Government-run media broadcast anti-trafficking and child labor radio and television programs and debates, often in collaboration with NGOs. Burkina Faso and the Dutch government jointly financed the film &Golden Ransom,⁸ which addresses child labor in gold mines, holding discussions after screenings throughout the country. The government's anti-trafficking committee, established in 2002, continued to meet

quarterly. A national action plan to combat trafficking,
drafted in 2004, was adopted by the Cabinet in April 2007.